



Delay fall tillage



By delaying fall tillage, the waste seeds of corn, rice, and other cereal grains remain available to resident and migratory birds, such as these snow geese and Ross' geese.

What to do:

If your crop rotation pattern and weather permit, delay tilling harvested fields until you need to cultivate. This allows the waste seeds of corn, rice, and other cereal grains to remain available to waterfowl, sandhill cranes, pheasants, song birds, and other wildlife during fall and winter. Untilled wheat and corn stubble provide excellent food and cover for pheasants and waterfowl through fall and winter. You can roll, chop, and/or flood the stubble to encourage decomposition. Leave safflower stubble until mid-October, if your planting schedule permits.

Dry rice stubble provides fall cover and unharvested seeds for pheasants. Rice fields harvested with a stripper-header leaves tall stubble that is also attractive to pheasants, but is usually too dense for waterfowl. If you grow rice and wish to attract waterfowl, follow up with a flail mower and chop the tall stubble to make feed more accessible to waterfowl. Rolling and burning help, too.

Delaying tilling provides the most benefits for birds during fall and winter. If you plan to

cultivate in the spring, be sure to till before the nesting season begins in March.

Benefits:

- Provides high-energy food sources for wildlife by leaving waste corn, rice, or small grains on the soil surface, where they are accessible.

- Provides winter cover for pheasants and other species.

- Makes seeds of undesirable plants, such as watergrass (same as barnyard grass), available to wildlife during the winter.

- May help you diversify your farm's income base by providing hunting opportunities for geese and pheasants, if the field is left dry, or ducks and geese, if the field is flooded.

- Helps conserve soil moisture and control wind and water erosion.

- Can help encourage the presence of beneficial insects, such as spiders, wasps, and predaceous beetles. The types of insects associated with delaying fall tillage should not pose problems for your farming operation.